



# **Annual Report of the North West and Midlands STHF Independent Monitoring Board**

**For reporting period  
1 February 2025 to 31 January 2026**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

The North West and Midlands Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor and report on the welfare of people in a short-term holding facility (STHF) through observation of their treatment and of the premises in which they are held.

The Board conducts its work in line with the STHF Rules, which place the day-to-day operations of STHFs on a statutory footing. Part 7 of the Rules sets out the responsibilities of the Independent Monitoring Board (referred to in the Rules as the Visiting Committee). The Board has unrestricted access to every detained individual and all immigration detention facilities and to most records. IMB members have access, at all times, to all parts of the facility and can speak to detained people outside of the hearing of officers. They must consider any complaint or request that a detained person wishes to make to them and make enquiries into the case of any detained individual whose mental or physical health is likely to be injuriously affected by any conditions of detention. The IMB must inform the STHF manager about any matter that they consider requires their attention, and report to the Secretary of State on any matter about which they consider the Home Office needs to be aware.

The Board's duties also include the production of an annual report covering the treatment of detained people, the state and administration of the facility, as well as providing any advice or suggestions it considers appropriate. This report has been produced to fulfil that obligation.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detained individuals and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMBs are part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## **2. Description of the holding rooms**

### **2.1 Types of STHF monitored**

The North West and Midlands Board monitors three different types of STHF, each with its own requirements and challenges:

- Residential facilities
  - Manchester Residential STHF (RSTHF; known locally as MAN 302)
- Port holding rooms
  - Birmingham Airport
  - East Midlands Airport
  - Holyhead Port
  - Manchester Airport
- Reporting centre holding rooms
  - Liverpool (Capital Building)
  - Loughborough
  - Salford (Dallas Court)
  - Solihull (Sandford House)

A map of the above sites is shown in annex B.

### **2.2 Residential facility (Manchester Residential STHF)**

The North West and Midlands Board monitors one residential facility, at Building 302, on the Manchester Airport site. It is known locally as MAN 302, and it opened in June 2018, replacing Pennine House, which closed in March 2017. Like most sites monitored by the Board, MAN 302 is managed on behalf of Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) by Care & Custody, a subsidiary company of Mitie plc.

The facility is a purpose-built unit, located on the perimeter of Manchester International Airport, with a maximum capacity of 32 detained individuals<sup>1</sup>.

There are two floors. The ground floor contains the vehicle dock (which can accommodate two vans), a toilet and a lift to the first floor.

On the first floor, there is a toilet and another security door, which leads to the visitor area.

The visitor area has three rooms. Visitor Room one is the smaller of the rooms, measuring 10.5m<sup>2</sup>, and contains a table and four chairs, used mainly for interviews with detained people. Visitor Room two is larger measuring 14m<sup>2</sup>, and is set up for family visits, with chairs, a settee, and children's toys.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the STHF's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Home Office.

The main reception area measures 22.5m<sup>2</sup> and contains a searching area and a separate room currently used for private inductions and storage if required.

There is an open desk area, which accesses the control room, from which all areas of the facility are monitored on a continuous basis. Off the reception area is the medical reception/consultation area, which measures 18m<sup>2</sup> and contains an office and a searching area.

Once a detained person has been processed in the reception area for admittance into the facility, they pass through two security doors, which lead into an L-shaped corridor. Straight ahead are the showers and toilets for men, the kitchen and dining room and the majority of the bedrooms, usually used for detained men. Bedroom number seven, with four beds, has been designated as a room for women, if the bedrooms in the women's area are occupied. To the right, a corridor leads to the office of the Detention Custody Officer Manager (DCOM), female area, main association area, multifait room, laundry and storerooms, plus two single-occupancy bedrooms.

The main association room measures 59m<sup>2</sup> and contains four large three-seater settees, a table and four chairs, a wall-mounted television and a games console connected to another television screen. There is also a stock of portable DVD players, which detained individuals can borrow, if desired. There are also two computer consoles, which allow detained individuals controlled and restricted access to the internet, plus a good selection of reading material. There are three standalone electronic games units.

There is an 'outside' area. This measures 59m<sup>2</sup> and gives detained individuals access to fresh air. It is a large area containing numerous heavy-duty tables and chairs, where part of the roof has been left open to the atmosphere. The walls have been decorated with a landscape painting of the Pennines.

The multifait room, with an area of 12m<sup>2</sup>, contains numerous prayer mats and soft cushions. The laundry, which can be used by detained people, has two washing machines and two dryer machines.

There are also two single-occupancy bedrooms for any gender. Each contains a bed with two drawers beneath it. These rooms can be used for detained people who are considered to be vulnerable and they contain an intercom that allows direct communication with staff on reception.

The separate female area is 71m<sup>2</sup> and contains three bedrooms, one of single occupancy and two of double occupancy. There is a separate association room, with a settee, bean bags, a table and four chairs, and a television, which is fixed to the wall. A computer terminal is also available. There is a shower and toilet cubicle, plus a separate toilet facility.

The DCOM office contains a duplicate of the closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring screens within the control room. Windows are positioned on each side of the office to provide a view of each of the corridors.

The bedrooms designated for detained individuals are configured to house either four, three or two occupants. The four-person bedrooms occupy an area of 20m<sup>2</sup>. Each room contains beds, drawers. Every bedroom has windows, which provide natural light, and are covered with an opaque film to ensure privacy.

The toilets designated for men contain three shower stalls, three toilets and three urinals and washbasins, plus two electric hand dryers.

The dining room, with an area of 59m<sup>2</sup>, has four tables for four people, two tables for two people and one table for eight people. There is a large, glass-fronted refrigerator, a hot drinks machine and a television fixed to the wall. There were safes in the bedrooms during this reporting period; however, following an escape in March 2026, the safes were removed shortly afterwards, and lockers are now provided in the dining room for residents to securely store their personal belongings. The serving hatch leads to the kitchen area and storerooms. The equipment in the kitchen includes an electric oven, a microwave oven and a dishwasher. Leading off the kitchen is a room that contains five upright and two chest refrigerators.

Translation devices are available to allow Detention Custody Officers (DCOs) and detained individuals to communicate, irrespective of the detained person's language. It is anticipated that these devices will also be available for Board members to be able to better communicate directly with detained people; however, at the moment most communication is undertaken by members using 'ice-breaker' cards written in a variety of languages.

## **2.3 Port holding rooms**

### **Birmingham Airport**

#### *Overview*

The airside holding rooms are situated near the United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF) offices.

#### *Holding rooms*

The holding suite comprises two separate holding rooms:

- A family/television room, with an opaque glass frontage measuring approximately 6.7m x 2.4m, containing benched seating, bean bags, a complaints box and a large, wall-mounted television, with a 2.7m x 1.5m alcove fitted with a fixed picnic-style table and chairs. This room is typically used when families are detained, and there is a variety of children's items available, including play matting.
- An internal room (with no natural daylight), measuring approximately 3.7m x 2.4m and containing benched seating, a payphone and a complaints box.

Neither of these rooms contain any beds, but detained individuals can lie across the seating or on thin, soft, foldable mattresses, and they can be provided with washable pillows and blankets. Bean bags are available for detained individuals' use.

There are also two interview rooms, plus separate toilets/washrooms for men and women, with shower facilities. Detained individuals are generally free to move between any of these rooms. The small office area has basic furnishings, with flight and CCTV monitoring displays. An additional desk and chair have been provided for induction purposes, as well as a refrigerator. There is a microwave for heating up meals; other food can be obtained from the airport shops and cafés.

There is a large, wall-mounted television in the family room, but there are no televisions in the two internal rooms, as no TV aerial signal is available. However,

there are portable DVD players, with a selection of DVDs, and a radio for live news stations and radio shows, which is available for use by detained individuals.

A telephone is situated in one of the internal rooms, so that detained people can make and receive phone calls with some privacy. Shared mobile phones are available for use by detained individuals, using their own SIM cards.

#### *Holding room staff*

The holding rooms are usually staffed by two to three DCOs, with a gender mix. When detained individuals need to be taken to, or collected from, escort vehicles landside, or taken to removal flights, an officer from the adjacent UKBF offices will normally assist and monitor any remaining detained individuals while the DCOs are away from the holding rooms.

### **East Midlands Airport**

#### *Overview*

#### *Holding room*

The holding room measures approximately 3m x 3m. There is a toilet cubicle in one corner of the room, a metal sink with hot and cold taps and a wall-mounted soap dispenser in the other corner, plus a table with four metal seats fixed to the floor against the right-hand wall. There is a fold-out camp-bed available for a detained person to lie on, with disposable bed sheets, pillowcases and blankets available.

The walls of the room are painted white, with a number of notices and posters displayed on the walls. There is also a complaints box attached to the wall. There is a wall mounted television and clock. Religious books are available on request and are kept in the monitoring area. Other reading materials are also available, along with toys and other activities. There was no CCTV in the holding room during this reporting period however this was installed in May 2026 providing facilities for Officers to monitor live images. There is heating control in the monitoring area.

Bottled water is available for detained people; hot drinks can be fetched from the adjacent BF office on request. Only ambient food (i.e. items that can be stored at room temperature and do not require refrigeration or heating) is available for those who have been detained. Chilled food can be purchased locally, but there is no option to serve hot food. Staff have a gift card to purchase food items from WH Smith if required.

#### *Holding room staff*

The holding room is managed by UKBF officers. There is no Home Office contract for the running of the facility, so there are no dedicated DCOs to maintain the welfare of any people who have been detained. It is the role of UKBF officers on duty to monitor and look after all the detained individuals.

#### *Controlled waiting area*

The controlled waiting area (CWA) is situated in the immigration hall. It consists of eight bucket seats adjacent to where arriving passengers queue for passport checks. The seating has privacy screening, so people who are detained in the CWA are not fully exposed to arriving passengers.

## **Holyhead Port**

### *Overview*

#### *Holding room*

The holding room is located within the secure port area, close to the ferry passenger terminal and main access vehicular security gate.

The holding room is a 'portacabin' converted for the purpose and is manned on a 24/7 basis by Mitie Care & Custody staff. UKBF personnel are housed in their own offices a short distance away.

The entrance to the holding room is through a gateway, which is locked using a keypad device. There is security fencing from the gate to the entrance door of the facility. There is no inner secure area (within the secure port area) for the vans, which are used to transport detained people to and from the facility. The area is clearly visible to the public and passing vehicle traffic.

Entry through the main door leads to a corridor that runs the full length of the facility on the left-hand side.

The first door on the right leads to a store cupboard measuring approximately 1.5m x 1.5m. The second door on the right leads to the first of the two holding rooms. It measures approximately 4.8m x 2.1m. It contains a table and four fixed chairs, plus a four-seater bench seat, also securely affixed to the floor. Amongst the equipment contained therein is a drink dispensing machine, a water fountain and a television. The interior of this holding room can be seen from the corridor through glass windows. Leading from this holding room is a large shower and toilet area, measuring approximately 2.4m x 2.8m.

The DCO office is situated between the two holding rooms with glass windows, through which the occupants of each room can be observed when needed. Two fixed desks are fitted below each wall and face into each holding room. A microwave oven is situated on the back wall within a small kitchen unit area. The CCTV control panel and monitors are also located within the office. The cameras cover the entrance, each holding room and the outside space.

The fourth door in the corridor opens into the second holding room, which measures approximately 5.2m x 3.6m. It contains a fixed table and four chairs, plus a fixed four-bench seat. There is a drinks machine and a television. The toilet and shower room leads off from the holding room and measures approximately 2.4m x 2.7m.

Within each of the holding rooms, there is a supply of snacks, and hot microwave meals can be provided by the DCOs if required.

Further along the corridor there is one more door, leading into the staff toilet.

At the end of the corridor is the final door, which leads into a small outside area. This space is surrounded by security fencing, with an outlook over the port area and the rear of the passenger terminal. It is not used by detained individuals.

There is no natural light within the holding rooms.

#### *Holding room staff*



The holding room is usually staffed by two DCOs working day and night shifts, and normally of a gender mix. The facility is open all year round, on a 24/7 basis.

## **Manchester Airport**

### *Overview*

#### *Holding room*

The holding room facility is in Terminal 2 and is in an airside secure area adjacent to the arrival immigration hall and desks. It accepts those being detained from Terminals 1, 2 and 3.

Entry into the office is from a secure corridor running at right angles to the main immigration arrivals hall. Entry is via a door and keypad lock. The main office area measures approximately 15m x 6m. It contains three desks, the main CCTV monitors, a television, a flight arrivals and departures monitor, a sink and a microwave oven, which is used to prepare hot food for those in detention. There are windows on each side of the office that overlook into each of the holding rooms. There is an area that can be curtained off to conduct body searches in private. There are various cupboards that contain copies of Care & Custody paperwork and stocks of microwave meals, which the DCO prepare for those being detained. There are two baggage lockers for the luggage of those being held within the holding rooms. Each contains a window, which allows those in either of the holding rooms to always observe their luggage.

There are two holding rooms: the main holding room located to the right of the office and, to the left, the family holding room. Each room can only be accessed by an electronic keypad lock.

The holding room measures approximately 9m x 8m and contains fixed bench seating for eight people and two fixed tables with bench seating for six to nine people. There is a small refrigerator, a hot drinks dispenser and a water fountain. There is a television set and a BT phone. There is a separate prayer room, measuring approximately 5m x 3.5m. The toilets and shower are accessed via a vestibule measuring approximately 5m x 3m. The shower space measures approximately 7m x 1.5m and contains a shower head, a separate sink and a hot air electric dryer. The male toilet is approximately 3m x 1.5m and the female toilet is approximately 3m x 2m.

The family holding room is approximately 9m x 9m and contains fixed bench seating for eight, plus two tables with bench seating for up to 12 people. One corner area has been decorated specifically for children and contains a selection of toys and games. There is also a television, a separate games console and screen and a BT phone. There is a separate prayer room, which measures approximately 4m x 1.5m. The shower and toilets are accessed from a vestibule measuring approximately 4.5m x 3m. The baby changing room measures approximately 3m x 2.5m and contains fittings that allow for the care of small children and infants. The male and female toilets measure approximately 3m x 1.5m. The shower is contained within the area measuring approximately 3m<sup>2</sup>.

Folding mattresses and bedding are available for those being detained, if required.

All lighting in the facility is motion-sensor activated. The lighting for the holding rooms and office is controlled by dimmer switches. There is no natural lighting within the facility.

#### *Holding room staff*

There are usually at least four officers on duty during the day and two at night. This is normally a balanced gender mix. The duties of DCOs include escorting from other terminals within the airport and to removal flights.

## **2.4 Reporting centre holding rooms**

### **Liverpool (Capital Building)**

#### *Overview*

The facility in the Capital Building is located on floor –2, surrounded by other offices and corridors, and can only be accessed through secure corridors or a lift system, all of which preclude the provision of any natural light.

It is open from 9am to 5pm, three days per week, between Monday and Friday – the days may vary to suit the operational requirements of HOIE. Arrangements are in place with Care & Custody to staff it at other times, if necessary. It is sometimes used by HOIE to hold people under an immigration officer's power of detention when Care & Custody staff are not present.

There is an office area, measuring approximately 6.1m x 4.6m, with a CCTV monitor, lockers for officers' personal effects, and a water dispenser. There is also a sink, a microwave oven and seating for staff. All microwave food available for detained individuals is stored in a cupboard within this area.

The office area has windows that overlook the two holding rooms, plus hatches linked to each holding room. Detained individuals brought in by van are shielded from public view by opaque glass windows covering the offices that are passed.

#### *Holding rooms*

The larger room measures approximately 6.1m x 6.1m and is furnished with four metal bench seats for 16 people, and a table with three chairs. All furniture is secured to the floor.

There are two toilets, marked 'Male' and 'Female', leading from the room.

The smaller, child-friendly room measures approximately 6.1m x 4.6m. It has two tables, each with three chairs, and a single toilet with baby-changing facilities. Blankets, pillows and a prayer mat are available. The walls are decorated with colourful posters, and one wall has been decorated with a hand-painted mural depicting a colourful forest scene. A box of toys and colouring books are provided in the room, and a carrycot is available if needed. HOIE states that the intention is not to hold children in this room, and the facilities are provided on a contingency basis. Records indicate that no child has yet been held there.

Each room has a television and a BT phone. There is a bookcase containing a variety of reading material in each room. Bean bags are also provided for detained individuals' comfort.

Both holding rooms contain a suggestion/complaints box.

#### *Holding room staff*

The room is staffed by Care & Custody during the opening hours and, at other times, when requested, by HOIE. There are usually two members of staff on duty, with a gender mix.

### **Loughborough**

#### *Overview*

The HOIE's Loughborough reporting centre is based in the town centre. Officers from the East Midlands local immigration team are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which lead to detentions. Others are identified for detention and/or removal upon reporting at the centre.

#### *Holding room*

The holding room typically opens four or more days per week (the actual days vary each week), from 9am to 5pm, according to the demands forecasted by local immigration officers (such as, for example, for known enforcement visits or individuals scheduled to report).

The holding room measures approximately 5.2m x 5.5m and is monitored and recorded by CCTV.

There is only one toilet cubicle, in the corner of the holding room, which is shared by men and women, and contains a very small basin with hot and cold running water. There are baby-changing facilities.

The room can accommodate 10 detained people. To facilitate this, there is one table with four fixed seats, and the remaining fixed seating is placed against two walls.

There is a telephone available, which accepts incoming calls, and a number of shared mobile phones are available for use by detained people using their own SIM card.

There are notices on the wall relating to 'brochures of information', which are available in 15 different languages.

There is a limited supply of books and magazines, in various languages, for adults. In addition, there are activity packs, books and board games for children. A television is mounted high in one corner of the room, and a selection of DVDs are available.

A supply of croissants, biscuits and crisps is usually provided inside the holding room, to which detained individuals can help themselves; they are also regularly offered hot and cold drinks, and other food, including hot microwave meals.

The holding room has two fans for air circulation.

There is a complaints box in the holding room. Complaint forms are available in several different languages. The box is opened by a chief immigration officer on a daily basis.

### *Holding room staff*

There are two DCOs based at Loughborough, one male and one female. Their working environment is very restrictive, with an office space measuring approximately 5.5m x 1.8m and containing filing cabinets and a desk, leaving little free space for searches and other matters.

## **Salford (Dallas Court)**

### *Overview*

Dallas Court is the HOIE's reporting centre based in Salford. Officers from the local immigration team are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which lead to detentions. Others are identified for detention upon reporting at the centre.

### *Holding rooms*

The main holding area consists of two identical holding rooms. Each room has a toilet and hand-washing facilities, and there is also a baby-changing facility. There is a table with single seats for four, and a small, flat-screen television is positioned on one wall. There is a BT phone available, and also a mobile phone, which can be used by detained individuals using their own SIM card.

There are notices on the wall relating to 'brochures of information', which are available in 11 different languages. There are adequate supplies of books and magazines in various languages. In addition, there are jigsaw puzzles, puzzle books and children's toys.

CCTV covers both holding rooms and the area outside and is monitored by the staff.

There is a complaints box in each room, which is regularly checked and emptied by the chief immigration officer.

### *Holding room staff*

There are usually three DCOs on duty in the holding rooms, two males and one female.

## **Solihull (Sandford House)**

### *Overview*

Sandford House is the main reporting centre for the West Midlands and is based at HOIE offices in Solihull town centre. People report at given intervals, pending resolution of their immigration cases, some of whom are identified for detention and/or removal upon reporting at the centre. Officers of the Midlands Enforcement Unit are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which also lead to detentions. The holding rooms are open from Monday to Friday, staffed by DCOs from 8.30am to 5.00pm, and are also used by IE officers to hold detained persons under their own jurisdiction outside these hours (i.e. early mornings, late evenings and weekends).

### *Holding room*

The facility has one holding room, which is used for men, women and, very occasionally, for families. It measures approximately 4.3m x 5.8m and is covered by CCTV.

There are six seats, set around a fixed table in the middle of the room, with additional bench seating for five people. There are also two bean bags for detained individuals' use.

There are separate toilet cubicles for men and women within the holding room, and baby-changing facilities are available.

The food provided comprises a range of filled croissants, biscuits and crisps, with the option of hot meals and hot and cold drinks on request.

There is a complaints box, with complaint forms available in 16 different languages. The box is regularly opened by a chief immigration officer (CIO).

There is a telephone available, which takes incoming calls, and there are a number of shared mobile phones, which can be used by detained individuals using their own SIM card.

Magazines, some in foreign languages, are provided. Additional items include reading books, the Qur'an, the Bible, children's toys and activity packs.

The ventilation in the office area of the holding room is centrally controlled; the holding room ventilation is controlled by an air conditioning system that is adjustable by the DCO staff.

### *Holding room staff*

There are two DCOs based at Sandford House, usually with one male and one female on duty. Their working environment is restrictive, with office space measuring approximately 5.8m x 1.8m and containing a desk and filing cabinets, leaving limited space for searches.

### **3. Key points**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

The number of Board members has increased since our previous report but not in sufficient numbers. This has caused difficulties for existing Board members in completing our monitoring obligations (see the work of the IMB section).

The number of face-to-face monitoring visits has been maintained wherever possible by the remaining Board members, which are beneficial to those being held in detention (see the work of the IMB section). This also clearly demonstrates the Board members' commitment to their role.

The only facility the Board monitors that is controlled by Border Force directly is the East Midlands Airport. The Board remains concerned that those being detained there have no access to hot food. A greater security risk for both those being detained and members of staff has been the lack of fitted and operational CCTV system. This issue has been ongoing for over four years, with no resolution at the end of the reporting year. However, whilst not in this current reporting year, CCTV was installed in May 2026 providing facilities for officers to monitor the live images.

When people are detained in the Port of Holyhead facility, there is no secure vehicle bay within the secure port area for their transfer to and from the holding rooms. This could compromise the safety and dignity of those being detained, as well as staff.

During the year, the Board concentrated on a number of themes, taking these as the focus of conversations and observations during visits to all locations, alongside regular checks of the facilities, during a particular month.

The themes covered were:

##### **Baby Change Mats**

- Following an incident at Dallas Court a vulnerable adult care plan (VACP) was completed (April 2025) when a detained person attempted strangulation using the straps on the baby change unit. The straps on the same designed mat at Birmingham Airport had been cut off, putting the babies at risk of rolling off. A purpose-built baby change unit with a curved base was installed removing both risks (which the Board considers best practice). Further monitoring of baby change facilities across the estate showed a variety of mats, some with straps cut off and some with straps left on (meaning ligature points remained).

##### **Complaints**

- The frequency of checking complaint boxes in each facility is monitored routinely during IMB monitoring visits. From time to time, Board members leave notes in the boxes to monitor the speed of response and frequency of checking. In most cases, we found that complaints would be seen during, or shortly after, detentions, enabling a timely investigation.

##### **Health and safety**

- Although the health and safety of those being detained is a focus of each monitoring visit, in these themed visits particular attention was paid to wider

health and safety issues such as handling risks, legionella, risk of trips and falls and self-harm risks. No major issues were found by the Board.

### **3.2 Main judgements**

#### **Safety**

The Board does not conduct health and safety audits during visits but, as evidenced in our monitoring reports, we report on any safety issues noted in order to support the provision of a 'safe' environment for people being detained in the facilities.

At East Midlands Airport, the Board is of the opinion that the facility would benefit from being upgraded to the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.

Holyhead does not have a secure area for vehicles to park within the secure port area, for the transfer of detained people to and from the facility. The main gate to the facility is a few metres away from the edge of the dock and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled, with possible fatal consequences.

At Manchester Airport there was an attempted escape through the ceiling tiles in the toilet area, the alarm was triggered and the situation was quickly deescalated by staff. The detained person had attempted to dislodge the ceiling tiles with the wooden cutlery.

On limited occasions, Board members have observed the induction of individuals being detained: each time, it was carried out with humanity and dignity and in a professional manner.

#### **Fair and humane treatment**

Whilst our monitoring visits only provide a 'snapshot' of the treatment of detained individuals; our visit reports give no indication of any mistreatment. Objective evidence of this is recorded in visit reports, which record members' discussions with those being detained, and we have not received any negative comments regarding staff or conditions.

The Board remains concerned that, since July 2023, individuals being detained at East Midlands Airport have no access to hot food and may be held in the CWA, where dignity and privacy is compromised when staffing levels do not permit admission to the holding room. The Board acknowledges that improvements to the CWA have been made with additional privacy screens having been provided. On one occasion a family with a child had one family member detained and the other not. A decision was made to leave the family in the CWA giving more space for the child to play and prevent anxiety of the family being separated. This demonstrated empathy and compassion of Border Force staff seeking the best solution for all concerned.

The Board are concerned that the number of detained persons in Sandford House has increased and that detained individuals are regularly detained late into the evening, meaning when they later arrive at an IRC, a hot meal may not be available for them.

The light in the female toilet at Sandford House was out of order for in excess of nine weeks. Having females share the same toilet with up to eight males demonstrated a

lack of privacy and dignity for any female put in that vulnerable situation. The Board felt it was unacceptable to wait for over nine weeks to change a light bulb.

During its visits, the Board has observed detained individuals being treated in a dignified manner, with consideration and courtesy being demonstrated by Care & Custody officers.

The Board is concerned about the time it takes to rectify deficiencies to the structure and equipment within all the facilities the Board monitors. An example is the temperature in the family room at Birmingham Airport, which can be as low as 13 degrees centigrade.

The Board discusses all outstanding issues raised during monitoring visits with all the stakeholders during monthly Board meetings to ensure matters are expedited quickly wherever possible.

### **Health and wellbeing**

The Board remains concerned that, generally, detained individuals are still being denied access to their own medication while in the holding rooms and, again, urges the Home Office to reconsider their current position. There was an incident at Birmingham Airport in March 2025 when a type two diabetic was detained; the DCO's sought medical advice before allowing him access to his medication using a common-sense approach to prevent unnecessary distress and without compromising his wellbeing.

Of the facilities covered by this Board, the only one that has a medical professional on duty full time is the Manchester RSTHF. At all other facilities, staff have to rely on local procedures, which include NHS services in the form of calls to 111, 999 and the local mental health crisis teams or by arranging a transfer to hospital A&E, which the Board considers is far from satisfactory.

### **Preparation for removal, transfer or release**

Monitoring visit reports indicate that when detained people arrive or are being transferred to other facilities, their treatment has always been with dignity, consideration and professionalism.

The Board has concerns that whenever detained people arrive or depart from the Holyhead facility, it is undertaken in full public view of foot ferry passengers awaiting to board or disembarking from coaches transferring them from ferries. They are also in full view of any vehicle traffic in the port area.

## **3.3 Recommendations**

### ***TO THE MINISTER***

The Board seeks a response from the Minister with respect to the following issue raised in this report:

- For the eighth year in succession, the Board repeats its concern at the lack of proper procedures that would allow the Home Office or its contractors to routinely provide detained individuals with access to their own medication. The Board considers the welfare of some of those who have been detained may have been adversely affected by this situation, depending on individual



medical conditions. We were informed that the provision of this service was going out to tender in 2026, can the Minister please update with progress?

***TO THE UK BORDER FORCE/HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT***

- Hot food is not available for those detained at East Midlands Airport. The Board would recommend that this decision is reconsidered.
- Whilst the detaining officers have a direct view to constantly watch and monitor detained individuals within the holding room at East Midlands Airport; the Board recommends that the facility be upgraded to the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.
- The Board is concerned at the practice of leaving detained people in the CWA, and recommends that they should always be afforded the dignity, privacy and relative comfort of being moved into the holding room where there are toilets and other facilities to help them rest.

***TO THE FACILITY MANAGER/DETENTION CONTRACTOR***

- The Board would like to acknowledge the excellent engagement and participation at Board meetings by Care and Custody managers and Home Office Escorting Operation staff who have been proactive in addressing issues and concerns in a timely manner to ensure the best outcome for detained persons. The collaborative approach to issues and problem solving has been extremely successful.

**3.4 Progress since the last report**

- All ports (that is, Birmingham, East Midlands and Manchester airports and Holyhead seaport) have shown a decrease in detentions of 548 individuals (20%) from 2,746 people in the last reporting period to 2,198 people in this reporting period.
- Within the overall detention figures above, the number of minors detained also decreased by 93 individuals (30.1%), from 309 minors in the last reporting period to 216 minors in this reporting period.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

The Board does not conduct safety audits on the facilities that are monitored. During our visits, members generally note the overall safety aspect, such as, for example, that portable fire extinguishers are in place, there are no obvious trip hazards and the general cleanliness and tidiness. Visit reports have not highlighted any specific safety concerns relating to violence within the facility.

On a limited number of occasions, Board members have observed the induction of individuals being detained. Each time, it was carried out with humanity and dignity and in a professional manner.

#### **Serious and reportable incidents**

Across the reporting period, there were a number of incidents at the facilities monitored, including self-harm, use of force and medical emergencies. The Board found that the staff dealt with these issues with expertise and great sensitivity maintaining the dignity and wellbeing of the detained persons at all times.

#### **East Midlands Airport holding room STHF**

Whilst the detaining officers have a direct view to constantly watch and monitor detained individuals within the holding room at East Midlands Airport; the Board is of the opinion that the facility would benefit from being upgraded to the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.

#### **Holyhead Port STHF**

There is no secure vehicle bay in the secure port area for the transfer to and from the holding rooms for those being detained in the Port of Holyhead facility. The main gate to the facility is only a few metres from the edge of the dock and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled. This could compromise the safety and dignity of detained people.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

The Board provides the following evidence in terms of its work monitoring the fair and humane treatment of those who are detained. In consideration of this, the Board regularly monitors a number of factors, including:

- Occupancy: the number of people detained in each facility.
- Length of detention: whether individuals are being detained in line with the guidance for each type of STHF, and that people are not being detained for an unnecessarily long period.
- Lateness of detention: when people are detained in holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, so may arrive at an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) at a late hour, when kitchens and other facilities may no longer be in operation.

### **Manchester Residential STHF (Building 302, Manchester Airport)**

#### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 2628 people were detained at Manchester RSTHF, a decrease of 751 (22%), compared with 3379 in 2024. There were no minors detained in MAN 302 during 2025. The 2628 people detained came from 102 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania 428 (16.3%).

#### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was one day, 11 hours and 30 minutes, compared with one day, 9 hours and one minute during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 49 minutes to six days 15 hours and 30 minutes.

### **Ports**

#### **All ports**

#### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 2198 people were detained at all North West and Midlands Ports (i.e. Birmingham Airport, East Midlands Airport, Holyhead Sea Port and Manchester Airport), a decrease of 548 (20%) compared with 2,746 in 2024.

There were 216 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, a decrease of 94 (30.4%) compared with the figure of 309 in 2024. The 2198 people detained came from 110 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania (281/ 12.7%).

#### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was eight hours and 14 minutes, compared with seven hours and 56 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from one minute to 46 hours and 20 minutes.

## **Birmingham Airport**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 519 people were detained at Birmingham Airport, a decrease of 329 (38.8%) compared with 848 in 2024. There were 22 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, a decrease of 37 (62.7%) compared with 59 in 2024. The 519 people detained came from 55 different countries, with the largest proportion coming from Romania 252 (48.6%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was seven hours and 26 minutes, compared with seven hours and 46 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 15 minutes to 25 hours and 53 minutes. There were 97 (18.7%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2025, compared with 164 (19.3%) in 2024. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2025 was three (0.6%), compared with eight (0.9%) in 2024.

## **East Midlands Airport**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025 37 people were detained at East Midlands Airport, compared with 50 people detained in 2024. One minor was detained in the holding rooms during 2025, compared with eight during 2024, a decrease of (87.5%). The 37 people detained came from seven different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania 11 (29.7%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was six hours 58 minutes compared to four hours and 51 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from one hour 59 minutes to 21 hours and 39 minutes. There were four detentions (10.8%) in excess of 12 hours during 2025.

Since July 2023, in order to meet food safety requirements, the provision of hot food was permanently withdrawn. Snacks and chilled food remain available for those who are detained at the port. Other food is still available at the facility and can be purchased if required.

### *Overnight detentions*

Of the 37 people detained during 2025, four (10.8%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held until at least 5am).

## **Holyhead Port**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 246 people were detained at Holyhead Port, a decrease of 39 (13.7%) compared with 285 in 2024. There were 17 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, a decrease of two (10.5%) compared with the figure of 19 in 2024. The 246 people detained came from 17 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania 124 (50.4%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was nine hours and 43 minutes, compared with 10 hours and 27 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 55 minutes to 44 hours and 23 minutes.

There were 61 (24.8%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2025, compared with 92 (32.3%) in 2024. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2025 was five (2%), compared with 15 (5.3%) in 2024.

### *Overnight detentions*

Of the 246 people detained during 2025, 72 (29.3%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held until at least 5am), compared with 25 (8.8%) during 2024.

Smoking/vaping is not permitted in the holding rooms or whilst residents are in C&C's care as there is no secure outdoor space at Holyhead for detained residents.

## **Manchester Airport**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 1396 people were detained at Manchester Airport, a decrease of 167 (10.7%), compared with 1563 in 2024. There were 176 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, a decrease of 47 (21.1%) compared with the figure of 223 in 2024. The 1396 people detained came from 98 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania 301(21.6%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was eight hours and 51 minutes, compared with eight hours and 10 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from one minute to one day 22 hours and 20 minutes. There were 305 (21.8%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2025, compared with 302 (19.3%) in 2024. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2025 was 30 (2.1%) compared with 34 (2.1%) in 2024.

### *Overnight detentions*

Of the 1396 people detained during 2025, 446 (31.9%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held at least until 5am), compared with 228 (14.5%) during 2024.

## **Reporting centres**

### **All reporting centres**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 1355 people were detained across all North West and Midlands reporting centres (i.e. Liverpool (Capital Building), Loughborough, Salford (Dallas Court) and Solihull (Sandford House) - an increase of 316 (30.4%) compared with 1039 in 2024.

There were no minors detained in any of the holding rooms during 2025, compared to two in 2024 and none in 2023.

The 1355 people detained came from 60 different countries, with the largest proportion coming from India 645 (47.6%) and second largest from Algeria, 108 people (7.97%).

#### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was four hours 54 minutes, compared to five hours 48 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detentions ranged from 10 minutes to 22 hours 10 minutes.

### **Liverpool reporting centre – Capital Building**

#### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 110 people were detained at Liverpool Capital Building - an increase of 45 (69.2%) compared with 65 in 2024. There were no minors detained at the Capital Building during 2025, as was the case in 2024. The 110 people detained came from 31 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from India 17 (15.5%).

#### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was five hours and 11 minutes, compared with four hours and 52 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from one hour 12 minutes to 22 hours and 10 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding six hours during 2025 was 22 (20%), compared with 12 (18.5%) in 2024. The number of detentions exceeding eight hours during 2025 was nine (8.2%), compared with none in 2024.

Of the 110 people detained during 2025, 38 (34.5%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with eight (12.3%) during 2024.

### **Loughborough (East Midlands) reporting centre**

#### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 226 people were detained at Loughborough (East Midlands) reporting centre, an increase of 108 (91.5%) compared with 118 people were detained in 2024. There were no minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, as was the case in 2024. The 226 people detained came from 35 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from India 97 (42.9%).

#### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was five hours and six minutes, compared with four hours and 40 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 55 minutes to 12 hours and 5 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding six hours during 2025 was 49 (21.6%), compared with 25 (21.1%) in 2024. There were 20 (8.84%) detentions in excess of eight hours during 2025, compared with one (0.84%) in 2024.

Of the 226 people detained during 2025, 108 (47.78%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 13 (11%) during 2024.

## **Salford reporting centre – Dallas Court**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 149 people were detained at Dallas Court, an increase of nine (6.4%) compared with 140 in 2024. There were no minors detained in the holding rooms during 2025, as was the case in 2024. The 149 people detained came from 30 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Nigeria 23 (15.4%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was four hours and 29 minutes, compared with four hours and 52 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 33 minutes to nine hours and 51 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding six hours during 2025 was 17 (11.4%), compared with 30 (21.4%) in 2024.

There were six detentions in excess of eight hours during 2025, but none in 2024. Of the 149 people detained during 2025, 43 (28.8%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 28 (20%) during 2024.

### *Incidents*

A detained person tried to self-harm with the straps on the baby change mat using them as a ligature (April 2025). The mat has not been replaced, and the ligature risk remains despite assurance that a national project was underway nationwide to review all facilities.

## **Solihull (West Midlands) reporting centre – Sandford House**

### *Occupancy*

During 2025, 870 people were detained at Sandford House, an increase of 154 (21.5%) compared with 716 in 2024.

No minors were detained in the holding rooms during 2025, while none were detained in 2024 or 2023. The 870 people detained came from 44 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from India 512 (58.8%).

### *Lengths of detention*

The average length of detention during 2025 was four hours and 48 minutes, compared with four hours and 50 minutes during 2024. The lengths of detention ranged from 10 minutes to 13 hours and 50 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding six hours during 2025 was 172 (19.7%), compared with 153 (21.36%) in 2024.

There were 79 (9.0%) detentions in excess of eight hours during 2025, compared with 45 (6.2%) in 2024. Of the 870 people detained during 2025, 371 (42.6%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 163 (22.7%) during 2024.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

The only facility within the remit of the Board that has a medical professional on duty full time is the Manchester RSTHF. At other facilities, staff have to rely on local procedures, which include NHS services in the form of calls to 111, 999 and the local mental health crisis teams or by arranging a transfer to hospital A&E, which the Board considers is far from satisfactory.

This was the situation throughout the reporting period. The Board considers that the welfare of some detained individuals could be significantly affected if they do not have access to their own medication, depending on the nature of their medical condition. The Board is concerned about the current procedures, which do not allow the Home Office or its contractors to provide detained individuals with access to their own medication. The Board considers that the welfare of some of those who have been detained may have been adversely affected by this situation, depending on individual medical conditions. This occurs particularly in holding rooms and reporting centres.



## **7. Preparation for removal, transfer or release**

Our visit reports indicate that when we have been able to observe detained individuals arriving or being transferred to other facilities, they have been treated with dignity, consideration and professionalism. However, the Board is concerned that when detained people arrive at or depart from Holyhead Port, there is no secure area for vehicles to park, for the transfer of detained people to and from the facility. The main gate to the facility is only a few metres away from the edge of the dock, where there is potential for the public to be able to see the arrival and departure of detained people, and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled, with possible fatal consequences.

The Board also monitors removals at Manchester and Birmingham Airports on an ad-hoc basis. During 2025, no one was removed while a Board member was present.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Activities of the Board

- Three new members were recruited to the Board in 2025. One resigned, leaving five members to undertake all visits.
- National recruitment campaigns were undertaken for the whole IDE during 2025, and the Board was looking to recruit up to six new members. However, only three have been recruited. Because of the delays and prolonged security vetting, the members recruited last year have waited over a year for clearance.
- The issue of airside passes is much improved, with a dedicated staff member coordinating this process.
- Outstanding issues at sites have been monitored closely at Board meetings, including the response times.

### Board statistics

|                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Recommended complement of Board members                           | 12 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period      | 6  |
| Number of new members joining within the reporting period         | 2  |
| Number of members leaving within reporting period                 | 3  |
| Number of members on long-term leave of absence                   | 0  |
| Number of active Board members at the end of the reporting period | 5  |

### Visits and phone calls made to STHFs

|                                                                         | Monitoring visits | Phone calls |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Manchester Residential STHF (MAN 302)                                   | 26                | 0           |
| Manchester Airport SEA                                                  | 27                | 0           |
| Birmingham Airport SEA                                                  | 27                | 0           |
| East Midlands Airport                                                   | 22                | 0           |
| Holyhead Port                                                           | 5                 | 2           |
| Liverpool reporting centre: Capital Building                            | 12                | 0           |
| Loughborough (East Midlands) reporting centre                           | 24                | 0           |
| Salford reporting centre: Dallas Court                                  | 9                 | 0           |
| Solihull reporting centre: Sandford House                               | 22                | 0           |
| Total number of visits to the STHFs (excludes Board and other meetings) | <b>174</b>        | <b>2</b>    |

*\*On occasion, phone calls are made (under a local agreement) where there has been no visit to the site.*

### Other attendances

|                                                                                                              |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Number of attendances at Board meetings (12 meetings held)                                                   | 49 |
| Number of claimable attendances at incidents                                                                 | 0  |
| Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings and monitoring visits (for example, forums, etc) | 3  |
| Number of mentored visits                                                                                    | 26 |

### **Note concerning the management information included in this report:**

*Data included in this report have been compiled from members' observations of holding room log sheets, maintained separately by both Mitie Care & Custody and HOIE, at those STHFs to which visits have been made. For the other sites, figures have been compiled from copies of holding room log sheets and other sources provided by Mitie Care & Custody.*

*Also, due to the cut-off dates on which the Mitie Care & Custody sheets are sent away to a central office, where they also undergo a data verification process, it is possible that the Board's collated figures may differ slightly from those supplied by Mitie Care & Custody to HOIE.*

*In addition, the Board monitors detentions and counts an overnight stay as one detention, whereas Mitie Care & Custody and/or HOIE systems monitor occupancy and may therefore count the same as two (or more) stays.*

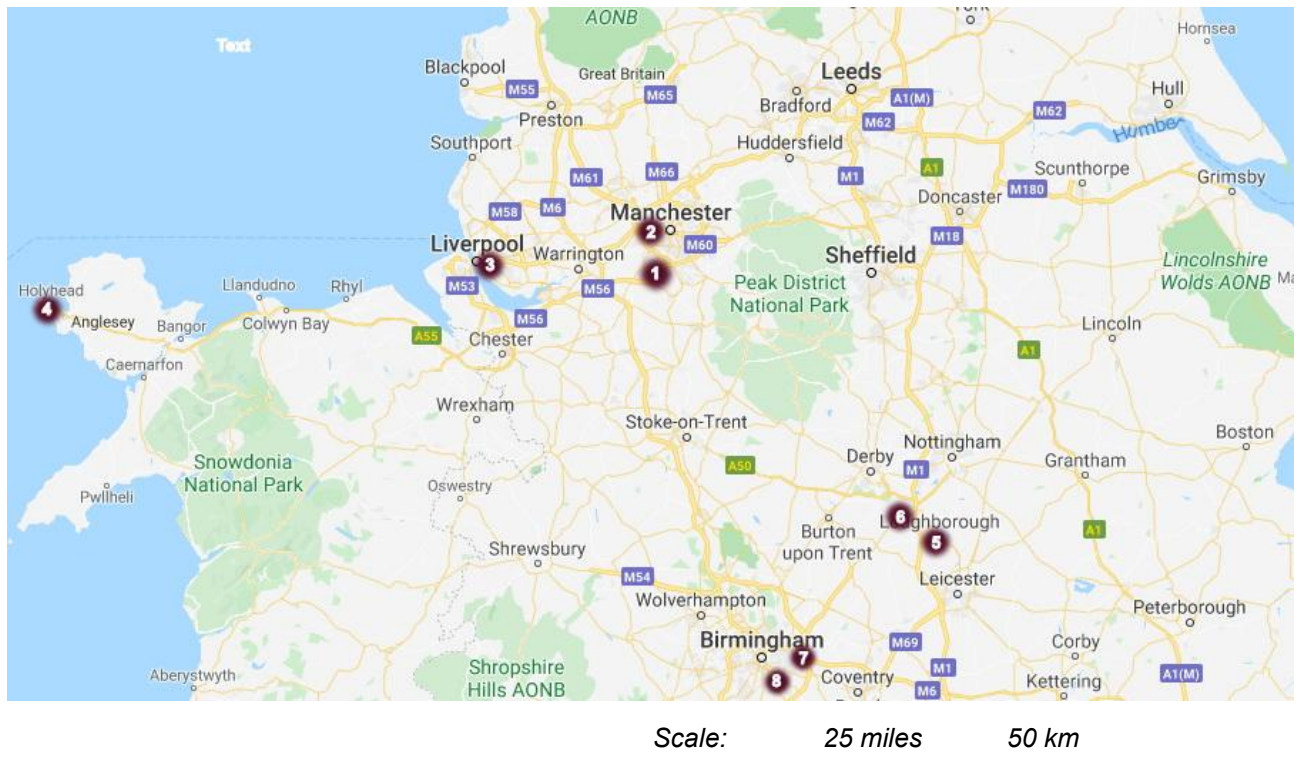
## Annex A

### Abbreviations

|                |                                                                                                                   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CAA</b>     | Civil Aviation Authority                                                                                          |
| <b>CCTV</b>    | Closed-circuit television                                                                                         |
| <b>CIO</b>     | Chief immigration officer                                                                                         |
| <b>DCO</b>     | Detention custody officer                                                                                         |
| <b>DCOM</b>    | Detention custody officer manager                                                                                 |
| <b>DEPMU</b>   | Detainee escorting and population management unit                                                                 |
| <b>EO</b>      | Escorting operations.                                                                                             |
| <b>FNP</b>     | Foreign national prisoner                                                                                         |
| <b>HEO</b>     | Higher executive officer                                                                                          |
| <b>HOIE</b>    | Home Office Immigration Enforcement                                                                               |
| <b>IDE</b>     | Immigration detention estate                                                                                      |
| <b>IMB</b>     | Independent Monitoring Board                                                                                      |
| <b>IRC</b>     | Immigration removal centre                                                                                        |
| <b>MAN 302</b> | Manchester Residential STHF, Building 302, Manchester Airport                                                     |
| <b>NPM</b>     | National Preventive Mechanism                                                                                     |
| <b>OPCAT</b>   | Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment |
| <b>RSTHF</b>   | Residential short-term holding facility                                                                           |
| <b>SEA</b>     | Secondary examination area (at airports)                                                                          |
| <b>STHF</b>    | Short-term holding facility                                                                                       |
| <b>UKBF</b>    | United Kingdom Border Force                                                                                       |

## Annex B

## Locations monitored by the North West and Midlands STHF IMB



1. Manchester RSTHF and Manchester Airport
2. Dallas Court, Salford
3. Capital Building, Liverpool
4. Holyhead Port
5. Loughborough
6. East Midlands Airport
7. Birmingham Airport
8. Sandford House, Solihull



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